



## HELPING CHILDREN DEAL WITH DEATH AND GRIEF

Children, as well as adults, experience shock, confusion and pain at the loss of a loved one. Parents can reduce their children's anxiety and pain by providing guidance and emotional support.

### **Some signs of a child's grief are:**

- Feelings of guilt
- Mood swings
- Hostility/aggressiveness
- Poor school performance
- Wish for own death
- Sleeplessness
- Depression
- Withdrawal

### **HOW TO HELP A CHILD DEAL WITH DEATH**

**Tell them the truth:** Give direct and simple answers for the absence or disappearance of a loved one. If appropriate, discuss terminal illness.

**Don't confuse them:** "Going to sleep" and "gone away" are not the same as dying. Children might expect the deceased to come back. Explain that death is final.

**Share experiences:** Allow children to attend a memorial or funeral, but don't force them. Let them know what to expect. Be ready to answer their questions.

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## HOW TO HELP A CHILD DEAL WITH DEATH (CONTINUED)

**Face grief:** Let children cry and vent feelings to encourage healing. Discuss fears.

**Reassure them:** Hold children. Offer reassurance that someone will always be there to love them.

**Encourage the creative expression of grief:** Write letters, songs or draw pictures to say goodbye.

**Take care of yourself so you can take care of your child.**

## WHO TO CALL FOR HELP

Self-Help Network  
1-800-445-0116



Kansas Children's  
Service League

Giving Kids Our Best. For Over 100 Years.

Parent Helpline  
1-800-332-6378

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